

# NEWSLETTER

**WORD OF  
SANTA**

**DECEMBER  
EDITION**

**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
ARTICLES**



**PSYCHOEDUCATION ORGANISATION**



# WORD OF SANTA-THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

This month we have something or rather someone special for you to deliver a message of goodness, love and celebration.

## Dear Readers

Ho, ho, ho! Greetings from the snowy North Pole! As the festive season jingles closer, I thought it was the perfect time to send a little note fromme, Santa, to you. My workshop is buzzing with activity—elves hammering, reindeerprancing—but amidst all the hustle, I've been reflecting on something very special. You see,Christmas is often seen as a time of giving and receiving gifts, but I want to share a secretwith you: the most precious gift of all is one we carry within us.

It's you the kindness you share, the warmth in your heart, and the goodness that radiatesfrom your actions.





**CONTEt: GARIMA  
SINGH  
DESIGN: HONEYIKA  
HARIAN**



When you show kindness, even in the smallest of ways—a smile to a stranger, a comforting word to a friend, or lending a hand to someone in need—you light up the world around you. That light is what Christmas is truly about. It's about love, compassion, and spreading joy inwards that leave lasting imprints on others' hearts.

Think about how it feels when someone does something kind for you—doesn't it feel like a little spark of magic? That's the same feeling you give to others when you choose goodness. And here's the best part: the more you give of yourself—your time, your empathy, your love—the richer you become in return.

So this year, remember that the real gift isn't what's under the tree. It's the goodness within you. It's your ability to make someone's day brighter, to inspire others to be kind, and to carry the spirit of Christmas not just for one day but throughout the year.

As I prepare my sleigh for the big night, I want you to know how proud I am of the wonderful person you are. Stay merry, stay kind, and always believe in the magic of who you are.

With love and holiday cheer, Santa Claus 🎅

P.S. Remember, even when the snow melts and the lights come down, the gift of your goodness is evergreen.





# VOULENTERS OF THE MONTH

**Samyukta exemplifies dedication through her exceptional efforts in managing and diving deep into our backend operations. Her commitment has been instrumental in helping us explore and expand into new areas, driving progress across various initiatives.**



**Gopika has been an exceptional volunteer in our Bangalore team. As one of our youngest members, she consistently demonstrates a strong work ethic and a proactive approach. Her eagerness to learn by doing and her ability to adapt quickly have made her an invaluable asset to the team.**



**Anupama and her many wonderful merits, including her adaptable writing style while holding clarity of idea, and strong organisational skills, along with her dedicated, disciplined hard work, have been major contributions this past month, and have earned her this accolade**

**CONTENT: SMRITHI RANNORE & ANSHIKA VERMA**

**DESIGN: SREE VANSHIKA BEHARA**



# WORLD AIDS DAY: A GLOBAL CALL FOR AWARENESS, ACTION AND COMPASSION.

To picture a life where every aspect of your life is scrutinised, where every passing glance and whisper seems to erase your existence. Horrifying, isn't it? Such isolation and cruelty are the stuff of nightmares for most, but for those living with AIDS, it's the harsh reality they are forced to wake up to every single day. Often faced with systemic discrimination and rejection by loved ones and communities, misconceptions about the disease persist, leading many to associate it with moral failings that are deemed socially unacceptable. **World AIDS day**, celebrated annually on **December 1st** is an initiative to spread awareness and **commemorate the lives of people who have lost their lives to AIDS**.



Let's take this opportunity to shed some light on importance of addressing one of the most devastating pandemics in human history. The **origins** of world aids day lie in the **late 80's**, a time when the AIDS epidemic was claiming lives at an alarming rate and **misconceptions of the disease** was at an all-time high.



Some of the key messages include **prevention methods** that focus on **safe sex practices, regular testing**, seeking **timely treatment** and encourage **access to antiretroviral therapy (ART)**, **spreading awareness** and **promoting education** to help reduce the stigma and misconceptions surrounding the disease and lastly providing ample support and advocacy for better healthcare access and social inclusion.



Conceived by **James W. Bunn and Thomas Netter**, public information officers at the **World Health Organization**, the day aimed to provide a platform to spread accurate information, combat stigma, and advocate for global cooperation in fighting the disease. It has evolved into a powerful reminder on the ongoing battle against HIV/AIDS.

With a staggering estimate of **39.9 million** people globally towards the end of 2023. The disease disproportionately **affects vulnerable communities** of sex workers, intravenous drug users and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

One of the most pivotal moments in HIV/AIDS advocacy came in **1987**, When the **late Princess Diana** shook hands with an AIDS patient (**she did so without gloves!**), publicly challenging the **notion** that **HIV/AIDS** was **not transmitted** through **contact**. A powerful act of human kindness, that further solidified her status as the people's princess.



But you may ask how we as a community can help make a difference. Well, its important to always **start by taking baby steps**, try wearing a red ribbon as a symbol of solidarity, start by joining or organizing events, fundraisers or workshops to support the cause or even just sharing facts and stories on social media helps promote awareness and combat misconceptions about HIV/AIDS.

In **conclusion**, World AIDS Day is more than just a date on the calendar, it is a global call for awareness, action and most importantly compassion. Which help honour the memory of those we have lost along the way in this battle against AIDS and build a future free from HIV/AIDS.



**CONTENT: RHEA SANDRA**

**DESIGN: SHREY GUPTA**



# DAY FOR PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

## Celebrating Triumph: The Inspiring Journey of Ellie Simmonds

December 3rd, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, is more than a date on the calendar. It's a celebration of strength, a testament to resilience, and a tribute to the indomitable human spirit. Among the countless stories of courage, one name stands out: **Ellie Simmonds**, a Paralympic swimming champion whose journey is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

### A Dream Born in the Depths of Challenge

Ellie Simmonds came into this world with **achondroplasia**, a form of dwarfism, in 1994. From the start, her path was strewn with challenges. The world often underestimated her, casting doubts on her abilities simply because she was different. But Ellie was not one to back down. With a heart full of dreams and the unwavering support of her family, she dove headfirst—literally—into the waters of hope and possibility at the tender age of five.



## A Moment That Changed the World

The world watched in awe as Ellie Simmonds, the youngest member of the British team, emerged from the **Beijing Paralympics** as a **double gold medalist** in the 100m and 400m freestyle events. In those moments, she wasn't just a swimmer; she was a beacon of hope, a symbol of what can happen when dreams refuse to be caged by limitations.

Her story didn't end there. In 2012, at the **London Paralympics**, Ellie dazzled us again with two more golds, a silver, and a bronze, smashing world records and breaking barriers one stroke at a time.



## Beyond the Medals

Ellie's victories in the pool were monumental, but her influence stretches far beyond the lanes of competition. She has used her platform to champion disability rights, shatter stereotypes, and inspire a generation to see abilities, not limitations. Whether advocating for inclusivity or showcasing her versatility on shows like the BBC's **\*Strictly Come Dancing\***, Ellie proves time and again that no stage is too big and no dream too bold.

**CONTENT: GARIMA SINGH**

**DESIGN: MANDISHA MANDAL**



## A Legacy of Inspiration

Ellie Simmonds' journey is a reminder that true strength lies in the **heart**, not in the body. Her story is not just about medals or records but about hope, courage, and the power of refusing to be defined by anyone else's expectations. She has taught us to see potential where others see obstacles, to find light in the darkest of challenges, and to believe that no dream is out of reach.



## A Call to Action

As we mark the **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**, Ellie Simmonds' journey compels us to reflect on our role in building a more inclusive world. Her story is not just hers—it's ours, a testament to what humanity can achieve when we lift each other up. Let us honor her legacy by breaking barriers, embracing diversity, and celebrating the unyielding power of the human spirit.

Ellie Simmonds didn't just change the face of **Paralympic swimming**; she changed the way we see the world. And for that, she will forever be a hero.

To every individual navigating life with a disability:

Your journey is one of **strength, resilience**, and extraordinary **courage**. The world may sometimes see your disability as a limitation, but you know the truth—it is not a hurdle; it is a challenge, a call to rise, and an opportunity to show the world your boundless potential.



# HOLIDAY LONELINESS PARADOX



It is said that the holidays are the "**most delightful time of the year**", right?

Imagine endless parties with laughter with the family huddled around the fireplace or gathered around the dinner table and friends exchanging presents. However, this picture-perfect scene may seem like a cruel joke to many. As evidenced by the "**holiday loneliness paradox**", holidays frequently emphasize feelings of loneliness and isolation rather than happiness.

Although the word may sound fancy, the idea behind it is straightforward. It alludes to the discrepancy between **expecting happiness and family time** over the holidays and the reality that not everyone experiences those emotions. Rather, some people experience **loneliness, alienation, or even pure misery**.

The worst part is that it's not just those who are physically isolated. You can **experience emotional loneliness** even while you're **surrounded by loved ones or friends**. It's like feeling invisible when in a busy place, even with many around you.



The reasons behind the holiday loneliness paradox are surprisingly quite universal.

Our expectations are sky-high during this time. Every Instagram post, advertisement, and film exudes "**happiness overload**". It's crazy how much pressure there is to have a Hallmark holiday, complete with light Christmas trees and ideal white mornings. Let's face it, though: most people's lives aren't quite that ideal. It's easy to feel like you're the only one when reality doesn't align.

**Psychology Tidbit!** According to a study published in **Computers in Human Behaviour**, holiday social media browsing is associated with increased loneliness and decreased self-esteem. Why? Because it's easy to compare your behind-the-scenes footage with someone else's well-executed highlight reel.

**Holiday customs** are deeply ingrained, and when they are broken, it may seem as though something is missing. The season doesn't feel the same for whatever reason—you may have lost a loved one, moved away, or had a breakup. Because holiday customs, such as decorating or preparing meals, bring back memories of loved ones or moments, grieving tends to be at its worst around this season.



**Distance**, either **geographical** or **emotional**, is one another major reason for experiencing this. Not everyone is able to spend the holidays at home. Being physically or emotionally separated from loved ones may be painful, regardless of the reason—finances, employment, or strained relationships.





Although it doesn't discriminate, some groups may be more affected than others by the holiday loneliness paradox. **Who does this ultimately affect?**

When you are young adults or college students in their 20s, holidays might feel strange to many. Perhaps this is your first time being away from home, or you're balancing adult obligations.

Elderly people may feel more alone, especially if they have lost friends or companions. For those who have undergone a significant life transition lately, such as moving towns, losing a job, or going through a divorce can make the holidays feel particularly difficult. For individuals without robust social networks, though obvious, this one is nonetheless important to note. The holidays can throw a harsh focus on your family or small circle of friends.

There could still be a **surprising aspect to being alone!**

The twist is that loneliness **isn't** always a **negative thing**. But isn't that shocking? According to psychology, **loneliness** is really your brain's way of encouraging you to make connections. It's like a need for social contact.

However, this signal may become **confused over the holidays**. You may shut down or feel even more alone instead of being inspired to reach out. Therefore, it's important to learn how to control these emotions rather than allowing them to worsen.



The good news? Your holiday season **doesn't have to be ruined by loneliness.**

Here's how you can manage it:

✳️ A meaningful holiday **doesn't have to resemble a cheesy Christmas film.**

Instead of aiming for perfection, focus on the little things that **bring you delight.**

For instance, unable to pay for a fine meal? Enjoy a warm evening while sipping hot chocolate and watching your favourite films.

✳️ **Create new customs** if the existing ones seem uncomfortable or unnecessary.

✳️ Be **cautious** when using **social media**. Keep in mind that people only share their best moments. Siblings are most often the ones behind every ideal family snapshot.

Sibling arguments over who got to eat the final cookie are likely the source of every perfect family snapshot.

✳️ Even if it feels awkward, reach out. **Silence fosters loneliness.** Call someone you miss, join a virtual group, or send a text to an old buddy. You'd be shocked to learn how frequently people share your sentiments but are too afraid to express them.

✳️ **Show appreciation.** Well, this may sound cliché but being grateful changes the way your brain functions. According to studies, making a daily list of three things for which you are grateful might improve your attitude and fight loneliness.

For instance, "I'm grateful for my cat, my cozy blanket, and that amusing TikTok I came across this morning."



## Did you know that it's possible to spread loneliness?

Loneliness spreads through social networks, according to studies. You are more likely to experience loneliness if someone close to you is experiencing it.

**Long -term loneliness** can cause cardiac difficulties, immune system weakness, and trouble sleeping.

Furthermore, **different cultures** have **different perspectives** on loneliness during the holidays. For instance, Christmas is more of a romantic occasion in Japan, thus single people may experience pressure instead of loneliness brought on by relatives.

## Wrapping up (pun intended)!

The **holiday loneliness paradox** is a **real**, pervasive phenomena, not just something you're thinking about. The good news is that your **December doesn't have to be ruined by it**. You can change the course of loneliness and give the season personal significance by comprehending the underlying causes and making tiny efforts to connect.

Therefore, this holiday season, **let go of your irrational expectations** and accept reality. Whether you're doing a boring job, binge-watching cheesy romantic comedies, or Face Timing a friend, keep in mind that you're not the only one who feels isolated.

And that's the **true magic of the holidays, my friend**.



# SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

As the golden hues of autumn give way to the cold, dry winter, many people feel a familiar chill in the air. But for some, this seasonal change brings more than just frosty mornings and jackets—it brings a profound, pervasive sadness that seeps into every corner of life.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is not just "**the winter blues**"; it's a mood disorder characterized by **depression that occurs in climates** where there is less sunlight at certain times of the year.

The things that once brought joy—spending time with loved ones, favorite hobbies, even the simplest pleasures like a warm cup of tea—suddenly feel distant and dull.

It's as though the light has been switched off, leaving you fumbling to find your way through the day.

This is the reality for those living with SAD, a condition that **goes beyond mood swings or a dislike for cold weather**.

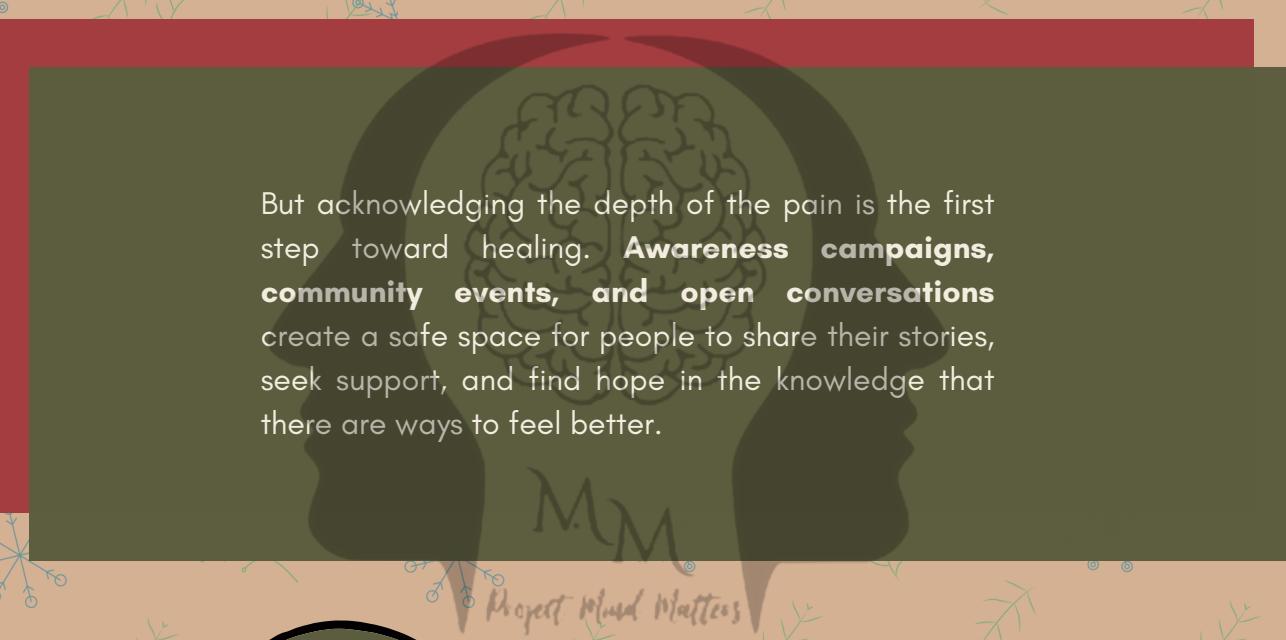
**What Is SAD Really Like?** SAD isn't just about feeling "off" when the weather turns gloomy. It's waking up exhausted no matter how much sleep you get, struggling to concentrate on even the simplest tasks, and feeling an overwhelming urge to withdraw from the world. Many people experience intense cravings for comfort foods, leading to weight gain that can deepen feelings of frustration and self-doubt. Others wrestle with irritability, hopelessness, or even thoughts of self-harm.

These feelings can make sufferers question themselves: **Why can't I just snap out of it? Am I being weak?** But the truth is, SAD is not a reflection of character—it's a medical condition tied to changes in the brain caused by the lack of sunlight in winter. And for those who face it year after year, the struggle can feel isolating and exhausting.

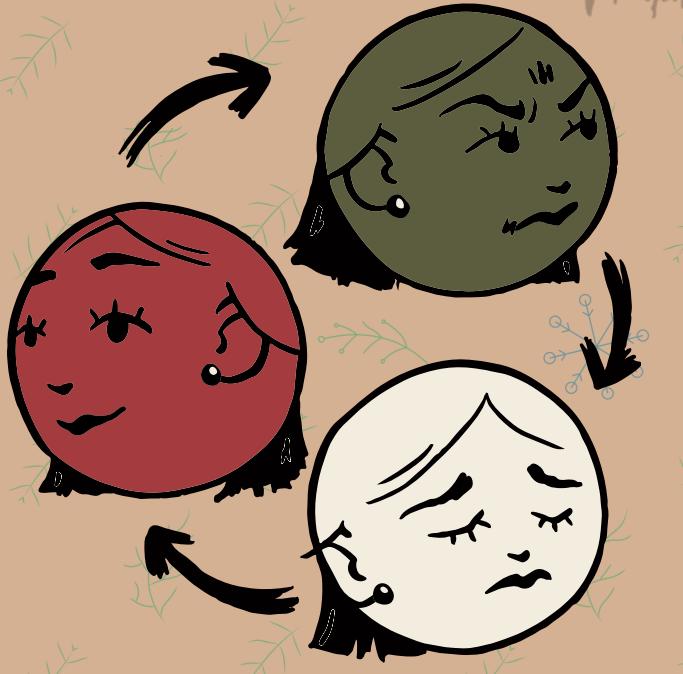


## Why Awareness Matters Seasonal Affective

**Disorder Awareness Day** exists to remind us that no one has to suffer in silence. It's a day to break through the loneliness and stigma, to say, **"You're not alone, and it's okay to ask for help."** Far too often, those with SAD downplay their struggles, brushing them off as seasonal grumpiness or attributing their symptoms to stress.



But acknowledging the depth of the pain is the first step toward healing. **Awareness campaigns, community events, and open conversations** create a safe space for people to share their stories, seek support, and find hope in the knowledge that there are ways to feel better.



**SAD is a reminder** that the changing seasons don't just affect the world around us—they can profoundly shape our inner world, too. On Seasonal Affective Disorder Awareness Day, let's take a moment to extend compassion to those who are struggling. A kind word, a listening ear, or simply an acknowledgment that their pain is real can make a world of difference.



[officialmindmatters@gmail.com](mailto:officialmindmatters@gmail.com)



**Mind Matters**



**Project** **mindmatters**

